Readyward
Make up ground, intelligently.

LAST-MINUTE EXAM REVIEW

AP PSYCHOLOGY

Current five-unit AP course framework | 2026–27

75 MCQs	2 FRQs	FIVE UNITS	MCQ SKILLS
90 min · 66.7%	70 min · 33.3%	15–25% each	65% apply · 25% methods · 10% data

RESEARCH METHODS / CAUSALITY

- **Experiment:** manipulates the independent variable (IV) and randomly assigns conditions; permits causal inference with sound controls.
- **Random sampling** selects participants → generalizability; **random assignment** puts participants in groups → controls preexisting differences.
- **DV** = outcome measured; **operational definition** = exactly how a variable is measured or manipulated; **confound** = alternative cause.
- **Correlational research** examines association; **r = −1 to +1**: sign = direction, magnitude = strength. Correlation ≠ causation.

DATA + RESEARCH ETHICS

- **Mean** = average; **median** = middle; **mode** = most frequent; **SD** = spread around the mean.
- **Statistical significance** ≠ large effect; **effect size** indicates magnitude. Interpret statistics in study context.
- **Ethics:** informed consent/assent, minimize harm, protect confidentiality, justify deception, debrief when appropriate.

AAQ · ARTICLE ANALYSIS

- **A** identify method; **B** state the variable/operational definition; **C** interpret the statistic in context.
- **D** identify an ethical guideline **and how researchers applied it**; **E** evaluate generalizability using sample details.
- **F** connect a specific finding to the proposed hypothesis or psychological concept. **1 article · 6 parts · 7 points.**

UNIT 1 · BIOLOGICAL BASES

- **Sympathetic** mobilizes; **parasympathetic** restores. Neural firing follows the **all-or-none** principle.
- **Hippocampus** → explicit memory formation; **amygdala** → emotion; **cerebellum** → coordination.
- **Thalamus** → sensory relay (except usual olfactory route); **hypothalamus** → homeostasis; **medulla** → vital functions.

UNIT 2 · COGNITION

- **Bottom-up** = sensory input → interpretation; **top-down** = expectations/experience shape perception.
- **Explicit** memory = conscious facts/events; **implicit** = nonconscious learning/skills.
- **Proactive** interference: old blocks new; **retroactive**: new blocks old. **Reliability** = consistency; **validity** = measures the intended construct.

EBQ · EVIDENCE-BASED

- **A:** make a specific, defensible claim grounded in psychology.
- **B:** cite **Source 1** (or another source), give accurate evidence, and explain it with a psych concept/theory.
- **C:** cite a **different** source, give new evidence, and explain it using a **different** psych concept/theory. **3 sources · 7 points.**

UNIT 3 · DEVELOPMENT + LEARNING

- **Piaget:** sensorimotor → object permanence; preoperational → symbolic thought/egocentrism; concrete operational → conservation; formal operational → abstract reasoning.
- **Classical conditioning:** stimulus–stimulus association; **operant conditioning:** behavior–consequence association.
- **Reinforcement** increases behavior; **punishment** decreases it. **Positive** adds a stimulus; **negative** removes one.
- **Fixed vs. variable:** predictable vs. unpredictable. **Ratio** = responses; **interval** = time.

UNIT 4 · SOCIAL + PERSONALITY

- **Fundamental attribution error:** overestimate disposition, underestimate situation when judging others.
- **Cognitive dissonance:** discomfort from inconsistent beliefs/behavior. **Conformity** = group pressure; **obedience** = authority.
- **Social loafing:** less effort in a group; **self-serving bias:** credit successes to self and blame setbacks externally.

UNIT 5 · MENTAL + PHYSICAL HEALTH

- **Stress response:** alarm → resistance → exhaustion (general adaptation syndrome).
- **Problem-focused** coping changes a stressor; **emotion-focused** coping manages feelings.
- **OCD** = obsessions and/or compulsions; **OCPD** = personality disorder. **Bipolar** disorders involve mania or hypomania; schizophrenia ≠ dissociative identity disorder.
- **CBT:** modifies thoughts and behavior; **exposure** uses learning principles to reduce fear.

HIGH-CONFUSION EXAM TRAPS

- **AAQ:** describe the ethic used in the actual study, not just name a generic ethical principle.
- **EBQ:** evidence alone ≠ reasoning; each explanation must link the evidence to a psychological concept.
- **Current framework:** five units, not the older nine-unit outline. Avoid outdated review lists.

Unofficial AP review. Not affiliated with or endorsed by College Board. Verify current AP exam guidance.
Source framework: College Board AP Psychology CED (effective Fall 2025) + Oct. 2025 clarifications.